

Request for Proposals
Violent Crime Enforcement Teams (VCET)
Calendar Year 2017 Funding
Due September 7, 2016

Purpose

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to solicit applications for multijurisdictional Violent Crime Enforcement Teams (VCETs) to investigate and prosecute narcotics, gangs and associated violent crimes. Multijurisdictional approaches that incorporate the expertise of prosecutors, law enforcement personnel and criminal analysts from local, state and federal agencies working cooperatively are most effective in addressing complex narcotics and gang investigations. Jurisdictions working together enhance resource sharing, interagency coordination and information exchange to target and disrupt persistent criminals and criminal enterprises. This approach is intended to target drug distribution networks, firearm crimes, violent gang activity and related serious criminal activity beyond the investigative resources of individual agencies.

VCET priorities include:

- Mid- and upper-level dealers
- Drug seizures
- Gun seizures
- Gang disruption
- Violent Crimes

In 2010, the Minnesota Legislature established the Violent Crime Coordinating Council (VCCC) to provide guidance related to the investigation and prosecution of gang, drug and related violent crime. Council responsibilities include the development of investigative protocols, operational procedures and multijurisdictional structure to best address gang and drug issues. The Council drafted a Guidelines Manual that must be adopted in order to qualify for grant funding. In addition, Minnesota Statute 299A.642 subd. 4, requires that all multijurisdictional entities must be certified in order to receive VCET grant funding.

Funds Available

A total of \$4.2 million is available for multijurisdictional VCET grants. The Minnesota state legislature appropriated funds to support multijurisdictional VCETs in state statute 299A.642 subd. 9. In addition, some federal Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) funds support these efforts.

There is no cash match requirement for these grants; however, the limited grant funds available will not cover the full cost of operating a VCET. Participating agencies typically contribute personnel, equipment, space, vehicles and local cash resources as well as forfeiture proceeds.

Grant Term

Applicants may apply for the 12-month grant period of January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017. Grants may be extended for an additional 12 month period depending available funding and acceptable performance.

Application Deadline

Applications must be submitted using the e-grants web-based system by **4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 7, 2016**. Plan to submit the application well before the deadline so any technical problems can be addressed. Applications will not be accepted after this time. *No paper submissions will be accepted.*

Eligible Applicants

Local units of government, tribes, county sheriff offices, and police departments are eligible to apply for funding. VCETs must incorporate the following elements that have proven successful:

1. VCET must be comprised of at least three separate law enforcement agencies. **Multi-county VCETs are required in counties with a population of less than 100,000.**
2. VCET must have at least 3 full-time officers assigned and co-location of the VCET officers is strongly preferred. There can also be additional full-time, part-time or liaison officers assigned.
3. VCET must be under the operational direction of a full-time commander or team leader.
4. VCET targets violent offenders and/or felonies that have the likelihood of being related to the distribution of narcotics and/or other cases that have a significant multijurisdictional impact.
5. VCET operates in accordance with the Multijurisdictional Task Force Operating Procedures and Guidelines Manual and adheres to any other requirements for procedure or accountability that may be adopted by the Violent Crimes Coordinating Council.
6. An active governing board is in place that meets at least quarterly and plays a significant role in developing and monitoring VCET priorities, budgets, and operational policies and procedures. The board must hold staff accountable for adhering to the Guidelines Manual and for producing meaningful results in accordance with jurisdictional threats and strategies.
7. VCET has a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) that addresses a formal framework for planning and coordination of case activities. Membership, personnel commitments, targets, operations, resources, equipment, use of forfeitures, and management and liability would be specific topics that must be addressed in the JPA.
8. VCET enters data into any statewide system implemented for the purpose of information sharing or officer safety. This includes gang information, as well as RISSnet and eTrace.
9. Seizures of cash, real property and personal property must be completed in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations and all VCETs must promptly report forfeitures in accordance with MN. Statute 609.5315, subd. 6.

10. Net forfeiture proceeds must be claimed and used for the benefit of the VCET when the related case is considered and reported as a VCET arrest.
11. All VCETs will be reviewed annually for compliance with statutory certification requirements in Minnesota Statute 299A.642 establishing the Violent Crimes Coordinating Council (VCCC).

Application Process

All applications must be submitted via e-grants, the Office of OJP online grants management system, at <https://app.dps.mn.gov/egrants/> **NOTE: When ready to submit your application, click on “View Status Options” from your Grant Menu and then click on “Apply Status” under the *Application Submitted* option.** (If you fail to do this your application won’t actually be submitted.) For assistance submitting your application or navigating through the application, you should reference the Grantee/User Manual by clicking on the *Training Materials* link at the top of most e-grants screens.

To establish a new user account if you do not already have one, click on the purple “New User” option in the login box in the upper right corner of the e-grants homepage and fill out the profile. e-grants User Guides can be found on the OJP Grants webpage at: <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ojp/grants/Pages/default.aspx>

Technical Assistance

For questions regarding the VCET application content, please call: Kristin Lail, Office of Justice Programs, MN Department of Public Safety Kristin.lail@state.mn.us or 651-201-7322.

For questions regarding the e-grants online submission process, please call: Claire Cambridge, Office of Justice Programs, Claire.cambridge@state.mn.us or 651-201-7307.

An optional application workshop will be held on Tuesday, August 16th, 2016 from 10:00 a.m. to noon at the Anoka County Sheriff’s Office, 13301 Hanson Blvd., NW Andover, MN 55304.

NOTE: Any clarifying information or updates regarding this Request for Proposal will be posted on the OJP website at: <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ojp/grants/Pages/default.aspx>

Application Materials

A general description of each component of the 2017 VCET application follows. New applicants should address the same components as current grantees using data from partner agencies.

1. Grant Program Guidelines/Terms and Conditions

As part of submitting this application in e-grants the applicant agency agrees to the Terms and Conditions of OJP Grantees for non-state applicants as well as the VCET Program Guidelines. These address Federal and State requirements such as worker’s compensation, civil rights, affirmative action, and data privacy. By agreeing to these you are certifying you have the authority to make these commitments. Please print and review these documents with the appropriate agency staff prior to submitting the application in e-grants. These documents become by reference part of the formal grant contract agreement.

2. Purpose area

In the e-grants forms menu, you will have to select Violent Crime Enforcement Team from a drop down menu and enter the name of your VCET under Program Name.

3. Project Information Form

Applicants will input grant contact information directly into e-grants. This includes the authorized representatives for the agency that will receive the grant, tax identification numbers, project abstract, and other identifying information. This form will be the cover sheet of the proposal.

4. VCET Information Form

Applicants will input VCET staff information directly into e-grants. It includes VCET commander, advisory board chair, prosecutor and administrative information as well as listing VCET partners, population served and staffing.

5. Project Narrative

Please address the following topics in a Word document of no more than 10 double-spaced typewritten pages, with $\frac{3}{4}$ " margins and a 12 point font size. *This Word file will be uploaded into e-grants.* Please use the following outline for your project narrative:

A. Partners and Staffing

Provide additional detail to augment the VCET Information Form regarding partner agencies, advisory board composition, prosecutor involvement and staffing, including commander, investigators, analysts, administrative staff. Highlight any changes from your 2015-16 grant. Include a brief summary of staff recruitment, office location, training and supervision. If your VCET includes or borders tribal lands, describe how you are coordinating with tribal law enforcement.

B. Threat Assessment

- Discuss the geographic, demographic, economic, and social conditions that contribute to drug distribution, drug abuse, firearm use and trafficking, and criminal activity in your geographic area. Address how the area's location and transportation infrastructure may affect the movement of drugs through and into the area.
- Detail the nature and scope of the drug threats in the VCET area. In the order of the severity of the threat, describe the availability and abuse of the following: cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, marijuana, prescription drugs and synthetics.
- Discuss all phases (wholesale, midlevel, and retail) of the drug distribution process in your area. Address if there are gangs or other criminal networks, the quantities they distribute, pricing, and distribution methods. Highlight any national or international ties or associations these groups may have.
- Discuss violence related to drug abuse and drug distribution. Comment on violent crime, person and property crime, vandalism, community intimidation, competition for territory, firearm violations, human trafficking, and other criminal enterprises such as identify theft and financial crimes.

C. Operational Plan

- Describe how you will identify VCET targets by analyzing relevant data and engage the community to establish criminal enforcement and prosecution priorities. Include a summary of planned operations that will address the statewide VCET priorities:
 - Mid- and upper-level dealers
 - Drug Seizures
 - Gun Seizures
 - Gang Disruption
 - Violent Crimes
- Summarize the outcomes you have previously achieved in addressing statewide VCET priorities, including highlights of significant investigations that demonstrate the value of multijurisdictional coordination.
- Examine VCET data from 2015 and the first half of 2016 and set goals for 2017 supporting the VCET priority areas. Examples of data include charging level of felony drug cases, seizures of emerging or targeted drugs, gun seizures and non-drug violent crime arrests.
- Discuss how you have and will share intelligence/information and coordinate efforts with others who are not members of your task force in furtherance of your goals. To include: local, state and federal agencies; other task/strike forces; and community agencies and businesses.
- Describe the role your VCET will play (alone or in collaboration with others) to prevent drug and violent criminal activity. Highlight any community outreach activities or prevention programs in which your VCET has been involved.

D. Budget Narrative

Please provide the annual total VCET budget and describe the proposed local contributions of partner agencies to the VCET in 2017 including cash, personnel and in-kind materials and services. Also note if there are any other grant funds supporting this project. Explain the process used to manage pending seizures, asset forfeiture proceeds and other program income. Note the total program income and expenditures in the first six months of 2016, and the balance on 6/30/16. Also note the balance of local funds in your VCET operating account after grant reimbursement for the 2nd quarter of 2016 and balance of any VCET savings or contingency funds on 6/30/16.

6. Certification Requirements

Minnesota State Statute 299A. 642, Subd 4(a) requires the commissioner of public safety to certify multijurisdictional entities established to combat gang and drug crime. 2017 VCET applicants should review certification requirements with their Advisory Board and the Chair should sign the Certification Requirement Form. *Applicants will upload this form into e-grants.*

7. Budget Detail

Applicants will input budget detail information directly into e-grants for the 1-year period of January 1 through December 31, 2017. Directions are available in the *Training Materials* link on most e-grants screens. The summary budget is generated in e-grants after the detail is input. Budget detail should include a description of expenditures from grant funding in each line item. Expenditures must support the activities described in the Operational Plan narrative. Budget line items include: Personnel, Payroll Taxes & Fringe, Contract Services, Travel, Training, Office Expenses, Program Expenses and Other Expenses (including confidential funds). Not all line items need to be used. Each line item is input separately and should include a sufficient description and calculation of estimated costs. Multiple items may be included in each line item.

Non-supplant requirements. Currently-funded VCETs with positions supported by grant funds may continue to request funding for those positions. Any new sworn or civilian grant positions must be for expanded effort (new hires or back-fills) or retained positions (positions that would otherwise be lost due to a reduction in your agencies authorized positions for 2017).

Application Review Process

This is a competitive application process that will involve several levels of review. Reviewers, not associated with any current VCETs, will read and rate applications according to the following scale:

Partners & Staffing	30 points
Threat Assessment	20 points
Operational Plan	30 points
<u>Budget</u>	<u>20 points</u>
TOTAL	100 points

Reviewers will meet to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each application and responsiveness to the RFP. The Commissioner of Public Safety will review previous performance, reviewer comments, and supporting documentation to determine final award amounts for 2017. Applicants will be notified of funding decisions on October 26, 2016

Any appeals of funding decisions should be submitted in writing by November 9, 2016 to DPS Commissioner Mona Dohman, 445 Minnesota Street, Suite 1000, Bremer Tower, and Saint Paul, MN 55101.

Post Award Requirements

The following provisions will be required from applicants upon award of VCET grant funds:

- **Resolution.** There must be a resolution or other documented authority from the governing body of the applicant agency authorizing that entity to enter into a contract with OJP.
- **Grant contract process.** After being selected for funding, OJP staff will work with the applicant to negotiate a final budget. The formal grant contract consists of the Grant Agreement, the Terms and Conditions, the Program Guidelines, and the detailed budget. Once the Grant agreement is fully executed with signatures from the grantee and OJP, it is then a legally binding agreement. Grant agreements not signed within 30 days of receipt may be canceled.

- **Joint Powers Agreement.** A sufficiently detailed Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) between participating agencies must be submitted by January 1, 2017.
- **Progress Reporting.** Grantees will be required to submit regular narrative reports and data in a prescribed manner and cooperate with statewide evaluation efforts. Grantees receiving federal funds will also submit reports directly to the federal BJA using the Performance Measurement Tool (PMT).
- **Grant Payments.** This is a cost reimbursement grant. Grantees will only be paid for eligible expenses (after the grant contract is fully executed) that are incurred and are consistent with the negotiated budget.
- **VCET Certification.** OJP staff will conduct a site visit to all funded VCETs to certify compliance with eligibility criteria and statutory requirements of MN. Statute 299A.642, subd. 4.
- **Multijurisdictional Task Force Operating Procedures and Guidelines Manual.** Grantees will also be audited for compliance with standard operating procedures.
<https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ojp/grants/Pages/narcotic-violent-crime-enforcement-teams.aspx>
- **OJP Grant Manual.** Grantees agree to follow the OJP Grant Manual as part of the application process. The manual is a resource for how our office manages grants and covers topics such as grant administration policies, program modification policies, general accounting requirements, etc. [OJP Grant Manual](#)

Application Timelines

The projected timeline for the 2017 VCET grant review process:

July 27, 2016	RFP issued
August 16, 2016	Optional Application Workshop, Anoka County Sheriff's Office 10am-noon
September 7, 2016	Applications submitted in e-grants by 4:00 p.m.
October 19, 2016	Award recommendations reviewed by the Commissioner of Public Safety
October 26, 2016	Applicants notified of award decisions
November 9, 2016	Final appeal date
November 16, 2016	Grantee revised work plans and budgets and certifications due to OJP
January 1, 2017	Grant period begins. Joint Powers Agreements are due.

Right of Cancellation

The State reserves the right to cancel this solicitation if it is considered to be in its best interest. The State reserves the right to negotiate modifications to the application or to reject any and all applications received as a result of this Request for Proposals. The State does not intend to award a grant contract solely on the basis of any response made to this request, or pay for information solicited or obtained as part of this process.